

# Franciscan Herald and Forum



DECEMBER

1956

# Franciscan Herald and Forum

Official Organ of the Third Order of St. Francis in North America.

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Published monthly at 5045 S. Laflin St. Chicago 9, Ill., U.S.A., Tel. YArds 7-2100

Entered as second class matter March 23, 1940, at the Post Office at Chicago, Illinois, under Act of March 3, 1879. Acceptance for mailing at special rate of postage provided for in section 1103, Act of October 3, 1917, authorized April 1, 1934.

COVER PICTURE: At Greccio in 1223 the disguised lesson of the Faith was brought home to the country people: the Christ of Bethlehem and the Christ of the holy Mass and Eucharist are the same Christ offering himself for the welfare of our souls, begging us to love him in return, loving us to extremes. Francis exclaimed: "After the Lord was born for us, we just had to be saved." Francis' crib devotion is a symbol of all his life's work, renewing the faith, hope and love in a world growing cold, as the Church says in her prayer: "O Lord Jesus Christ, who with the world growing cold, in order to inflame our hearts with the fire of your love . . ."

Greccio was never confined to the fastness of those hills. The idea spread with the wild fire of Francis' love and has warmed the faith, hope and love of millions down the centuries!

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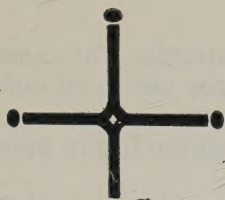
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# FRANCISCAN Herald and FORUM

APPLYING CHRISTIANITY IN THE SPIRIT OF ST. FRANCIS

DECEMBER, 1956 VOL. XXXV NUMBER 12



## Autoconditioning

A FULL PAGE ADVERTISEMENT in the book section of the Sunday papers hailed the latest—"Autoconditioning"—a new book to put power into your life, written by a leading psychologist of a great university. Free with the purchase (only \$4.95) is a "mood chart" to guide you through the labyrinthine ways of a day's moods so that you can meet every emergency, all unforeseen contingencies. Absolutely nothing will catch you off guard to dissipate your emotional power. Your perfect equilibrium can be accomplished all by yourself (auto-conditioning) by good "natural" living.

Gone are the days when people ran their lives by virtue—a word which in Latin means "power." Like thrift itself, virtue too has gone with boredom and is becoming un-American. We must learn to run our lives like controlled automatons; take the correct pill for periods of elation and use the proper remedy for moods of depression.

As the roots of the Faith gradually loosen, the basic virtues Christians lived by become more poetic, less liveable, amusingly old-fashioned, and, in fact, sound more like a poet and peasant symphony.

The Christian ethic of the Sermon on the Mount rings romantically, but, so many feel, living today takes stronger stuff than sermons, whether on the Mount or in the pulpit. It takes Milltown pills, equalizers and stabilizers, peppers-up and toners-down. The physics of the pharmacists is beginning to run the lives of modern Americans rather than the Faith of our Fathers. So jittery have people become by the rush of existence, so out of hand with themselves, that virtue is looked on as a last solution—but hardly soluble in the Rx cup for fast relief.

We forget that the Beatitudes (meaning happiness) are the Christian ethics, the Christian way of looking at life, the rules to live by if we are to be happy. There are not two kinds of happiness—one for this life and one for the next. We are not to be like children wearily eating through the meat and potatoes of this earthly

existence to get the pie and ice cream of eternal beatitude. The same Christian joy begins here below by living the virtues our Lord outlined in the Sermon on the Mount; that happiness of heart rises to completion in the life to come—an extension of what we began here below.

It might be a good idea for every tertiary to read chapters 5-7 of the Gospel according to St. Matthew to find out just what the rules for Christian living are. After reading, ponder. After pondering, ask for the power of God's grace. After asking, act in God's name. This is auto-conditioning yourself for Christian joy and tertiary living!

## News for the New Year

**B**EGINNING NEXT MONTH, the first two pages and the last two pages of the Franciscan Herald and Forum will be devoted to the Newsletter from the Central Office of the Third Order in North America. No other medium for the distribution of the Newsletter will be used except the official organ for the Third Order in North America—the Forum.

The decision to publish the Newsletter as a part of the Forum was arrived at during the meeting of the Third Order Commissaries held in Boston last month. Not only will it be more economical to publish it in conjunction with the Forum, but we believe that the Letter will receive better distribution as well—coming to the many officers personally, rather than filtering down through the spiritual director of a fraternity until it finally reaches the officers' council meeting.

That is the publishing news for the New Year. Besides that we are going to carry some of our regular features, with profiles on modern tertiaries by Fathers Albert and Mark each month, feature articles by Fathers Philip and Donatus, and a series of articles explaining the rule as we have carried in the past. The secretary of the Franciscan Educational Conference, Fr. Sebastian Mickles O.F.M.Cap., has promised us a fine series of articles; Fr. Maximus Poppy is preparing a new series, and we will continue the Discussion Guide as in the past.

At year's end we can report that the Forum has now the highest subscription list in its history. The magazine began by catering to a few interested directors some 33 years ago. It gradually expanded its scope to include not only directors, but officers and all interested in being informed Franciscans and Tertiaries. We now have over 5,000 subscribers and, we feel sure, 5,000 reading-subscribers!

The staff of the FRANCISCAN HERALD AND FORUM wishes its readers a blessed and grace-filled Christmas!

# The Martyrs

The Triumph of Christ through the Ages

by MAXIMUS POPPY O.F.M.

To Christian generations the lives of the saints have always been the first source of inspiration after the Bible itself. Among the saints, the martyrs have appealed most to Christians courageous for their dramatic deeds. When the great work of *Butler's Lives of the Saints* was recently re-published by P. J. Kennedy in four volumes, *Time* magazine (Aug. 6) devoted two and a half columns to the new edition: "The Saints are anything but dull . . . Their often wildly exciting lives and extravagant deaths provided the thriller reading for generations of 18th and 19th century Christians . . ." Editor Donald Attwater commented that "Writing or revising the lives of the saints is not the dull job most people think it is. It's astonishing what interesting material turns up."

Fr. Maximus Poppy has prepared two articles on the Martyrs, the first one appearing in this issue. And it is astonishing what interesting material he has turned up!

THE EDITOR.

**B**EFORE TAKING UP THE real theme of this month's article, as in the previous installments of Fuchrich's *TRIUMPH OF CHRIST*, the somewhat puzzling dramatis personae calls for a word of explanation. Ten figures passing in review are intended as types—martyrs for the faith joining in the procession from every walk of life: laymen, deacons, priests, bishops, popes, soldiers, royalty. Only men are seen in the present picture; a forthcoming panel is dedicated to sainted representatives from the weaker sex. We also wonder why the artist chose less known figures for nearly one half of his actors when scores of classic martyrs could have been used.

The editor's note accompanying the first installment of this series in the April issue told the reader that artist Fuehrich spent most of his life in Prague and Vienna—two key cities of the then Austro-Hungarian monarchy. It was natural, therefore, for him to select the one or other martyr enshrined in the popular devotion of the several Danubian countries—Sts. Wenceslaus, Vitus, Adalbert, John Nepomucene.

As for the rest, it remains to remind the reader that each of the marchers in the procession bears, in addition to the familiar palm of martyrdom, some identifying mark, as for example, the instrument of his death. Thus, the deacons Stephen and Lawrence wear the dalmatic of their sacred order and, while the former has stones with which he was killed tucked in the fore part of his tunic, the latter holds the grill on which he was roasted alive. Pope Clement, third successor of St. Peter, is identified by the tiara and the papal cross with its double crossbar. Holding a finger on his lips is St. John Nepomucene, the parish priest of Prague, who died as a victim to the seal of confession. The bishop next to him is St. Adalbert, who near the turn of the first millennium, preached the Gospel to the then heathen Prussians and Poles.

At the center, and almost frozen in a sweeping motion, is the heroic figure of St. Polycarp who, like Clement, lived close to the apostolic times. Saints Sebastian and George can be recognized—the one by the arrows so familiar to those who have

read Wiseman's "Fabiola"; the other, by the dragon, which English legend and tradition has come to associate with him. The procession closes with two other sainted martyrs enshrined in the devotion of the faithful in Central Europe—St. Vitus and King Wenceslaus (Vaclav) patron of what is now known as Czechoslovakia; the occurrence of Wenceslaus name in a modern English Christmas carol has no significance.

Clearly, today the persecuted Church in these Slav countries stands in desperate need of its patron saints and, no less, the prayerful sympathy of fellow-nationals who live in this sweet land of liberty. All of us in these United States witness only the faintest resemblance to persecution—occasional outburst of bigotry and the tacit labeling of a second-rate citizenship.

**S**O MUCH FOR THE EXTERIOR—the artistic packaging of the idea the painter wishes to convey. Certainly, the triumph of Christ is nowhere more graphically depicted than in the story of the holy martyrs written in their own life-blood. In them the spirit of Christ, his grace, his example, and his teaching achieved a signal victory over the world, the flesh and the devil. More especially is the supernatural fortitude drawn from the wellsprings of grace manifested in the long line of women martyrs, those classic Christian heroines memorialized in the canon of the Mass: the Felicitas and Perpetuas, the Agathas, the Lucys, the Agneses, the Cecilians, all the way to Jesuit Martyrs of North America, John de Brebeuf, Isaac Jogues with their blessed company, and Maria Goretti of our own day and age.

One and all, these holy confessors of the faith proved by their constancy in suffering and death that they acknowledged but one God and Master

who is greater than all rulers—Christ, the King of kings. Deaf alike to the threats and blandishments of their torturers, they sacrificed all for Christ. Strengthened by his word and grace and buoyed up by his eternal promises, they fought the good fight and received the crown of justice laid up for them by the Lord, the just Judge. To express this idea of *triumph*, the martyrs are usually pictured with palms, the emblems of victory.

Here too, an almost obvious reflection is borne in upon us. In these holy martyrs, as in the host of others of all ages and states of life, we have an object lesson in the powerfulness of the grace of Jesus Christ sufficient to bring weak human nature to the point of heroism; grace that is able to sweeten whatever is bitter and harsh to flesh and blood. If we only had a normal measure of the martyrs' resolution and fervor, we should find the seeming difficulties which discourage our cowardice to mere phantoms of the imagination. A lively faith—one that is operative instead of being lodged only in the thinking portion of our mind—would make us, like it did the martyrs, discount the good things of life when they interfere with the interests of God's kingdom; we would measure the goods and evils of the present life and judge them, not by the standards of nature, but by the principles of Christ's holy doctrine.

What if today any of us were put to the test of declaring at a real cost, even life, that we profess the faith of Christ. We so lightly profess it now because it costs us near to nothing! What if we had to forego a comfortable life (to say nothing of life itself) to defend the Christian virtues we indubitably subscribe to in theory. We who would as easily tell a lie to save thirteen dollars; or expose our faith to danger in a pagan school or in a questionable marriage alliance for the

sake of a standing in the better set or for a secured existence?

FROM THESE REFLECTIONS let us proceed to something that may prove an interesting and informing exploration. Have you ever stopped to examine the official prayer of the Church for the feast of a given saint as it is found in the Missal and breviary? If not, try it in respect to the first four martyrs on this month's picture. You will discover that the Collect in most instances points up the salient virtue of the saint or blessed—the one that loomed large in his or her canonization or beatification. Or, the prayer will highlight the saint's blessed activity. At any rate, it is a pithy, thumbnail biography. But then, the Church assumes that the one reciting the oration is really familiar enough with the sainted person's history to catch the clue. Or, should the prayer remain something cryptic?

Take St. Stephen for example. The collect reads in part: "Grant us . . . to imitate what we venerate, that we may learn to love even our enemies. . . ." The one for St. Lawrence refers to "the fires of his torments," and adds the petition that we may "see the flames of our evil dispositions ex-

tinguished in us"—an appropriate prayer when preparing for Holy Mass and Communion. You probably guessed it: *it is* in the fore part of the Missal among other recommended preparatory exercises for the priest.

Now, turn to the third and fourth martyr of our narrative, Saints Clement and John Nepomucene. For the former we read: "O Eternal Shepherd, do thou look favorably upon the flock, which we beseech thee to guard and keep for evermore through the blessed Clement, thy martyr and supreme pontiff, whom thou didst choose to be the chief shepherd of the whole Church." All illusions are Clement's to sacred office and the prayer calls upon our own fidelity in the faith. Finally, note how the collect verifies what was merely touched upon in pointing out St. John Nepomucene in the picture: "O God, whose Church the unconquerable sacramental silence of blessed John has enriched with yet another martyr's crown:: grant that, strengthened by his prayers and example, we may set a guard upon our tongue, and be ready to endure any suffering the world can inflict, rather than risk the loss of our soul." Or we may add, sinfully gain a hundred dollars!! ●



**A Christmas "Ave Maria" that brought new life to a concentration camp and and a new look in the eye of the jailers for it was . . .**

## A Gift for Our Lady

ALEXANDER FRITTA is not a Catholic, that is, not yet, but the Marian influence in his life is unquestionable. Like so many innocent people whose only "crime" was to be "non-Aryan," he was swept up in the maelstrom that wreaked havoc in central Europe. The time is still vivid in the minds and memories of many people living today. It was the period when misguided zealots goosestepped with hobnailed boots over the bruised body of Europe. With thousands of prisoners like himself, Alexander was herded into a concentration camp in Trecebina, Poland.

Trecebina is a small, idyllic town, whose undulating hills of vineyards once reechoed the strains of carefree song. In December 1944 a morbid silence blanketed the frigid countryside. The concentration camp was situated at the foot of one of these hills. Here, war prisoners were dreaming futile dreams. Theirs was an almost unbearable fate, separated from loved ones and friends, they never knew when the number tattooed on their forearms would be called, signalling them for execution. It was all arbitrary. Life or death depended upon the whim or humor of a martinet.

Prison life is hard enough but it becomes worse when the officer in charge takes sadistic delight in tormenting the prisoners. The hardened heart of this sinister soul was the crux of the crisis. This soggy and be-

nighted brain had the authority to make life comparatively pleasant or a veritable hell. Right now it was a hell.

Could that soul be reached? Could that heart be softened? That was the question that tortured the weary mind of Alexander Fritta. What could he do? What talents had he? He was an artist, that is true. He had made many concert tours, singing to avid audiences of Europe. But who had a heart for singing in this place? To think of the good fortune that was his when he was riding high on the crest of popular favor was enervating. Music, however, was his element. If there was an answer to his query, it must be found in music.

As he reflected on his past success, he could not help recalling the faith and confidence his mother gave him on the way up the ladder of success. It was she who instilled in his young heart a love for music. It was she who gave him the courage to go on in spite of obstacles. As he thought of his own mother, another face came before his mind's eye, that of God's Mother. Many times in public appearances he had sung the Ave Maria. He recognized it as a salutation and a plea to her whose Son once was a prisoner like himself.

The more he contemplated the face, the more the idea grew. Some-

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by ALBERT NIMETH O.F.M.

thing had registered. His mind was racing across time and space, over race and creed, over continent and sea. Everywhere Mary was invoked in time of need, and never was it known that she turned a deaf ear. This was his answer. If anybody could touch that heart, Mary could.

WITH THE MADONNA CONSTANTLY before his misty spiritual eyes, he tells us: "I started to write my Ave Maria with numbed fingers, freezing in the cold, metal sheeted barrack of the camp. My music composing equipment consisted of a few sheets of paper, which I received from a good hearted sentry, and a small piece of wood, blackened by the fire of the crematory."

On and on he wrote. The music of his soul coming to life. Christmas Eve arrived. Alexander's pulse began to race as he thought of his next move. Would his scheme succeed? If it failed, it would mean death. But then death did not particularly frighten him. He had been marked for death several times before only to be saved by the quick wit and kind heart of a little gypsy girl. He had even seen his own mother sent to the gas chamber. He had nothing to lose now. Death would even be a welcome relief.

Without warning the door of the barrack was flung open. There he stood. He could have been the devil incarnate. A big hulk of a man, six foot or more, snapped the bull whip which he constantly carried with him. He was here for the periodic inspection and everyone knew it as they saw him standing there with haughty disdain.

"Achtung!" The crisp command of Alexander, now the block chief, echoed in the ominous silence. "Stand still!" The prisoners were on their feet in stiff attention. "Mutze auf." Like

trained robots the prisoners removed their little caps. "Augen recht." No one dared to move. They feared that whip. More than once they felt its unprovoked and underserved bite. It was the duty of Alexander Fritta to give his report—the number of prisoners, the number of deaths, the number of sick. He approached, saluted, and reported.

This was it. Turning sharply, he stood in front of the crib scene he had fashioned from the tin foil founded in the camp after it had been bombed by the Americans. Before another word could be uttered, he began to sing. "Ave Maria"—all hail, O Mary, in this time of decision. The rafters resounded to the plaintive crescendo. Inspired to write the music while on the threshold of death, he put his heart and soul into that rendition. "Sancta Maria." He forgot time and place. He was in his element. He was singing again. He glanced at his audience. The only one he cared about was the commander of the camp. "Sancta Maria." He fixed his gaze in the direction of the door. What he saw disturbed him. The commander had turned an ashen pale. Up to this point he stood there glued to the spot by some strange power. Suddenly he made an abrupt turn and fled from the barracks. "Ora pronobis." If ever Mary's help was needed it was needed now.

"B 6159," Alexander heard his number called the next day. He steeled himself for the worst. But the blow did not fall! Instead he received a strange request. He was asked to sing his "Ave Maria" again for the officers of the camp. The tide had turned. Mary had not failed. In an unprecedented move the commander ordered more food to be added to the meager rations of the prisoners.

(See page 373)

# Catholic Educational System Has Searching Self-Analysis

**T**HE CATHOLIC EDUCATIONAL system came in for searching self-analysis by a group of Catholic college educators in St. Louis during the first week in August—for falling down on the job of teaching students religion.

Catholic professors from six Catholic and non-Catholic colleges and universities agreed that religious training has become a sort of poor step-child in the crowded college curriculum. The three day meeting of the Serra Academy was held in Third Order Hall, 3200 Meramec St., St. Louis, Mo.

Some highlights of the meeting:

▲ The Very Rev. Pius Barth O.F.M., Provincial of the Franciscan Province of the Sacred Heart, and chairman of the board of Quincy College, said too many schools concentrated on merely an "intellectual approach to higher education," instead of a complete approach, which considered things spiritual as well as things material.

▲ Dr. William A. Weber, professor of biology, Duquesne University, Pittsburgh, said many Catholic schools imitate secular universities by deleting religious training from academic courses. Students get only "segregated morsels of religious education in tidbit courses hopelessly wedged in an overloaded curriculum," he said.

▲ Because of the lack of Catholic teachers in public schools, erroneous ideas about the faith, which occasionally come up are never answered, according to Dr. Marie A. Moore, professor of mathematics at Harris Teachers' College. Harris, administered by St. Louis Board of Education, prepares teachers for the St. Louis public school system. In her seven years of college training at Catholic schools, she said, there had been "little or no discussion of religion in mathematics classes." She said there was little difference between such classes in Catholic and non-Catholic schools, except for the crucifix on the walls of Catholic classrooms.

▲ Dr. John W. Ryan, Notre Dame University educational consultant, said too many Catholic schools forget the ultimate end of a Catholic education. "The ultimate end

is the growth of the Mystical Body and the Kingdom of God, as presented in the whole plan of Redemption—not merely as presented in some course in philosophy," he said.

▲ Dr. William A. Osborne, professor of economics at St. Joseph's College, Emmitsburg, Maryland, said too many educators were attempting to solve "the problem of life" with their own intellects, ignoring the light from supernatural revelation. He suggested Catholic scholars seeking true wisdom should follow Christ's admonition to "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God." Love of God, he said, is a prerequisite for true understanding in any field.

## A CHANGE NEEDED

Dr. Weber, a former research chemist at Anheuser Busch Corporation, called for a sweeping change in the Catholic universities' attitude toward the place of religion in education. All too many schools, he said, place far more emphasis on the physical sciences than on religion. He himself is a professor of one of the physical sciences—biology—at Duquesne University.

Even universities with good religion and philosophy programs frequently have the effect of such courses weakened by the overriding pressure of "more important" science courses, he pointed out. The student, without adequate time to study both, studies the sciences and ignores his religion. At grade time, he "throws himself upon the mitigating padre, who all too often practices more charity than he is given a chance to preach." Such emphasis is unrealistic, particularly in view of the great number of science professors who lack adequate religious training, Dr. Weber said.

"The ignorance of many a modern professor in the realms of religion makes him quite incapable of reconciling anything he teaches to the law of God," he said. "And so the hiatus in the mind of the student between what he begins to imagine is scientific truth, as distinguished from God's truth, becomes even wider."

He noted that there were virtually no Catholic textbooks in biology. One good

one, by the late Msgr. Ulrich A. Hauber of St. Ambrose College, Davenport, Iowa, was never revised by the publisher and kept up to date because it "wouldn't sell," he said. Yet it was one of the few books dealing with the principles of life, that actually explored such things as the family, population-control eugenics, and the nature of knowledge and personality, as well as more traditional biological material, he pointed out.

What is needed is a reuniting of religion in all phases of educational life, Dr. Weber said, so that every subject can be "permeated with Christian piety." Catholic educators must provide the leadership in this, he said, for if they do not lead, they will be led by others with far different views.

The same point was covered by Dr. Ryan, a former Harvard University faculty member and author of the *Idea of a Catholic College*. The Communists, he said, have stolen a page from Medieval Catholics in attempting to transform the world with their teachings. Today too many Catholic college graduates are transformed by the world instead of transforming it, he noted.

### PROMOTE CHRISTIANITY

"We educators must be concerned with promoting Christianity and culture," Dr. Ryan said. "We can't leave it to Hollywood, advertising, and the 'Ladies' Home Journal.'"

Catholic students, unlike the Communists, are not trained to "go out and transform the world," and few Catholic colleges give their students enough training in the intellectual virtues to enable them to cultivate them as habits. Also lacking from the usual Catholic college curriculum are needed courses in aesthetics, appreciation, and Christian culture, Dr. Ryan noted.

"No one lays down his life for a definition," said Dr. Ryan. "One reason the early Christians had the spirit they did is that they never separated poetry from theology. All too many of our Catholic universities are entirely neglecting the aesthetic side of man's nature. The Greeks had a word for a man who led an unintelligent life. It was *amoussous*—a man who was "not of the muses."

Rather than pointing the finger of blame at others, the speakers at the Academy meeting were in general agreement that they themselves must attempt to instill a more Christ-centered spirit into their classrooms.

### MEANS SUGGESTED

Dr. Weber, in a keynote address, suggested ways in which this could be done:

1. Educators must quit mimicking secular schools' aims and methods. "Let us not in one breath preach that eternal salvation is our ultimate goal in life, and in another bestow great honors upon an alumnus because he has become a corporation vice-president."

2. Educators must take a bigger part in molding students, putting more emphasis on character and less on school credits, worldly, dissipating influences should be removed from the campus.

3. Students should be given an opportunity to learn Christian virtues by having the chance to practice them in everyday life.

4. We must make a sincere effort to cultivate the element of spirituality as our educational ideal. We must cultivate in the student not only the knowledge of science, but the sense of piety. We have got to put aside the idea of learning for its own sake: We must cast aside the "science which puffeth up."

5. Training of the intellect should be secondary to the training of the will and heart. Intellectual education should derive from spiritual education. "What we advocate are not lower intellectual standards, but more intense religious standards."

### A SLOW PROGRESS

Dr. Weber acknowledged that many schools would be slow to change their curricula. But wholehearted co-operation of all faculty members might make it possible more fully to integrate religion in campus life, he said.

Serra Academy, organized under the auspices of the Third Order of St. Francis, is composed of a group of Catholic college professors and those interested in the educational problem. Most of the speakers at the Academy meeting were members of the Third Order. The Rev. Elias Koppert O.F.M., commissary provincial of the Third Order of Sacred Heart Province, is spiritual director of the group. John S. Johnson, author of *The Rosary in Action* (Herder), presided at the meetings. Other speakers included the Rev. Walter J. Ong S.J.; Dr. Florent E. Franke, Dr. John D. Dwyer, all of St. Louis University; Miss Helen McAlpin, Cleveland high school teacher; and Rev. Fintan McNamee O.F.M., Ph.D. from the Catholic University of America. ●

# A MANY SPLENDORED LOVE!

WHEN A CERTAIN YOUNG man asked Our Lord, "Which is the greatest commandment in the law?" Our Lord answered, "Thou shalt love thy Lord thy God with thy whole heart, with thy whole mind, with thy whole will, and with all thy strength. The second is like the first, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." St. Paul later on shortens the commandment still more when he says that love of neighbor is the fulfillment of the law. But St. Paul is not really leaving love of God out, because no one can love his neighbor as himself unless he loves God first.

The virtue of charity or love which contains the whole law is "an infused supernatural virtue by which we are inclined to love God above all things for his own sake and love ourselves and our neighbor for the love of God." Faith and hope have only God as their object; but charity tends towards both God and neighbor. We love God because he is good, all good in himself and because he is good to us. And we love our neighbor because God loves him. And our love is the better. The more unselfish our love is, the better it is, for so much the more we see the goodness of God and neigh-

bor and forget about ourselves. After all, love does tend towards someone else, wishing him well and then doing something to promote his welfare. Action is the language of love.

## The Divine Model

Our Lord set the perfect example in love of God and neighbor. He told us what we must do to show our love for Him, "If you love Me keep My commandments." That was the same norm He followed to show His love for His father. His whole life, from Bethlehem to Calvary, was a fulfillment of the commands of His Father. "My meat is to do the will of Him Who sent me." This obedience to His Father was the guide through His life even to the very end when in the Garden he pleaded that the chalice of suffering might pass, for He added immediately, "Yet not my will but thine be done! And for love of neighbor, He set up the standard again: "Greater love than this no man has than that he lay down his life for his friends." But He laid down his life for us while we were still his enemies through sin!

## Francis Too . . .

St. Francis took Our Lord's greatest commandment quite literally. He wished to love the WHOLE God with his WHOLE being. This is the barest and coldest description of Francis' love for God. But it hardly gives us the true picture. When Francis spoke of the love of God he used the language of a poet-lover, he spoke in superlatives. He was not content with merely urging others to love God; he goes into detail reminding us of the goodness, greatness, sublimity, beauty of God and all the gifts he has given us, so that he will be led to love God not merely in a general way, but that we might love the WHOLE God with our WHOLE being.

Thus in the First Rule he exhorts

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DONATUS GRUNLOH O.F.M.

his followers, "Let us love the Lord God, who has given us all, the whole body, the whole soul, and our life who has created us and redeemed us, and by his mercy alone will save us, who has done and does all good for us." And again later in the same Rule he continues, "Let us therefore desire nothing else except our Creator and Redeemer, and Saviour, the only true God, who is full of good, entire good, the true and supreme good, who alone is merciful and kind, gentle and sweet, who alone is holy and just. . ."

Then St. Francis goes into detail on what he means by loving God with one's "whole being." "Let us love the Lord God with our heart, with all our soul, with all our mind, and with all our strength and fortitude, with all our understanding, and with all our powers, with our whole might and whole affection, with our innermost parts, our whole desires and will. . ." And this love we should give to God "everywhere at every hour and at all times, daily and continually." Again in his paraphrase of the Lord's Prayer he gives the same exhortation in other words: "Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven, that we may love thee with our whole heart by thinking of thee always; with the whole soul by always desiring thee; with the mind by directing all our intentions to thee and seeking thy honor in all things and with all our strength, by spending all our powers and senses of body and soul in the service of thy love and not in anything else; and that we may love our neighbors even as ourselves drawing to the best of our powers all to they love.

In all this St. Francis was merely speaking out of the fullness of his heart and adding his voice to his actions. One need but read his life to see readily that his was a life of love of God, a love that longed for and pleaded to be in union with his Be-

loved, the God-Man, even in external appearance.

When we look through the rule we find that there is no mention made of the love of God expressly. But this should not surprise us in the least. St. Francis took that for granted, presupposed it as the foundation and starting point for all his followers. For anyone to observe the Third Order rule without love of God would be foolishness. The rule is a guide to help us increase and grow in love so that we love the whole God with our *whole* being.

### Love and Knowledge

You cannot love what you do not know. Hence a tertiary must first learn to know God the way Francis did. He learned to know God in the person of the God-man, Jesus Christ: in the crib, on the cross, and in the tabernacle. And his was not merely an academic study, but *prayerful* study and meditation. The tertiary must also learn about God and his perfection as made known to him through instructions, sermons, and reading. First among his readings should be the New Testament. After all, the tertiary life is the "gospel life." The crucifix also taught Francis much about Christ, because he spent many long hours in meditation before it. Tertiary followers of Francis do well to study the crucifix often and follow Christ in spirit to Calvary on the Way of the Cross. Again, Francis learned much about God in the Eucharist. That is why he never tired of coming back to his Beloved in the tabernacle. A great help for us to learn to know Christ in the Eucharist would be a careful and thoughtful study of the prayers used at Holy Mass.

Once we have studied God, especially in the person of the God-Man, and learned to know him, love will come easy. We cannot know God and

not love him. And to love him is to serve him. Knowledge and love of God will also shed a new light on creatures. Like Francis we will see them all as handiworks of God and use them only in so far as they will lead us to him. The "rule of moderation in the use of things" will seem very logical and an easy guide to follow.

## Love and Neighbor

We said in the beginning that charity is a virtue by which we "love our neighbor for the love of God." Certainly Francis' love of neighbor was not motivated by any selfish reason or for personal gain. Francis loved his neighbor for no other reason than the love of God. He saw in his neighbor a creature of God, a person redeemed by Christ, a person who was the temple of the Holy Ghost. Thus we find in his first rule: "And let them love one another, as the Lord says: 'This is my commandment, that you love one another.'" And he repeated the same admonition many times, that his followers should love all, even their enemies, "because the Lord says so."

In his discourse on True Love St. Francis says, "Blessed is the brother who . . . would not say anything about his brother behind his back that he would not say with charity in his presence." This finds an echo in the ninth chapter of the present Third Order rule: "Let them earnestly maintain the spirit of charity among themselves and towards others. Let them strive to heal discord wherever they can. "Much discord is caused today by indiscreet statements about others, especially when they are not present. We must distinguish between "news" and "truth." If we want willing listeners, we spread "news" (Scandals); if we want friends (and want to practice charity) we must often keep our tongues in check if not in

cheek, so that we do not destroy our neighbor's greatest treasure—his good name.

St. Francis says this about fraternal love: "Blessed is that brother who would love his brother as much when he is ill and unable to assist him as he loves him when he is well and able to assist him." Tertiaries have a good opportunity to merit this blessing by fulfilling the precept of the rule which states, "Let the officers either personally visit a sick member or send someone to perform the services of charity." The same holds for attending the wake and the funeral, if possible, of a deceased tertiary. These works of mercy may prove inconvenient, may demand giving up an evening of rest, or recreation. But a tertiary imbued with the unselfish love of neighbor as Francis was, will perform these tasks of love spontaneously and joyfully.

A tertiary's love of neighbor must be practical too: "In their daily lives let them strive to lead others by good example and promote practices of piety and good works." The tertiary must be an apostle of Christ, not only by his good example; that is not enough. He must be a leader and *promote* good works. Every parish has some activity (usually many) that can be labelled as good works. Every tertiary should be a loyal and dependable helper in these parish activities.

Nor can the charity of the tertiary be limited to any particular class or race. "Limited" charity has given rise to all kinds of "isms," persecutions and strifes. Universality is the real acid test of charity, because it indicates the motive of charity. Only the love of neighbor that is based on the love of God can be universal. Only the tertiary who "strives to do good to all" has true Francis-like love of neighbor. ●

## ST. FRANCIS and CHRISTMAS

Albert Nimeth O.F.M.

**S**T. FRANCIS CHERISHED the feast of Christmas. To him it was the feast of feasts because on this day the infinite love of God overflowed the banks of Heaven and streamed down to earth in the form of a lovable Babe. Francis knew that Christmas marked the beginning of our redemption. For that reason he desired that everybody should rejoice in the Lord. He wanted the people to strew grain on the snow covered fields for the birds. He desired that the beasts of burden be fed in a better way on this day. He wanted the rich to spread a bounteous table for the poor. All this was to be a gesture of love for the Christ Child.

**His Own Way** Three years before his death Francis resolved to celebrate Christmas in an expressive and beautiful way. At Greccio, on the western slope of the Rieti valley, there is a wooded cliff. Francis had received this as a gift from a friend. Two weeks before Christmas Francis called John of Velita and related his plan. "I wish to present in lifelike and visible manner the birth of the Infant of Bethlehem. Therefore, prepare in yonder woods a manger filled with hay. An ox and an ass must also be there just as in Bethlehem."

**O Holy Night** On Christmas Eve Francis and his followers and a group of simple country folk gathered around the scene. Holy Mass was celebrated with Francis as deacon. After the chanting of the Gospel, legend has it that John saw a beautiful Babe lying in the manger. When St. Francis lifted it with great tenderness, the Babe awoke and lovingly smiled at him. As the

poet puts it:

"A sudden hush—then thrills the  
list'ning silence

"My God, my All" framed in the straw-  
strewn place

A Babe—its reaching arms sweetly  
inviting

The intimacy of the saint's embrace."

**Glory to God** The dancing flames from the torches melted the atmosphere. From glad throats and joyous hearts the songs of praise rush forth. The wooded glen re-echoes the refrain the Angels sang on that first momentous night, "Glory to God in the highest." This scene was taken up by Mother Church and flashed throughout the world. Today it is part and parcel of our Catholic heritage giving glory to God.

**Wise Mother** The Church is a wise Mother. She knows her children. She knows that it is easier to pray and our spiritual being is more successfully engaged if through our senses our thoughts are enlivened and our imagination stimulated. Fervor is enkindled and devotion engendered by sensible representations of the Mysteries of Faith. That is why she does not disdain to make use of material objects as stepping stones to the higher life.

**And we** Whenever we kneel before the crib, it is well to reawaken the same sentiments that prompted Francis to construct the Crib scene at Greccio. It was love for the Christ Child. It was love seeking new outlets. It was a creature's desire to return in some slight measure the love of its Creator. That one word points up the relation between Francis and Christmas.

*Neither money, position nor power can replace the love of parents for a child. Lack of a mother's love gives us a picture from history within the memory of everyone . . .*

## EMPRESS VICKY

by DR. JOHN J. O'CONNOR, TERTIARY

I AM ALWAYS TRAILING KIDS. Perhaps it would be more accurate to say that my children are forever trailing me. What I really want to say is that whenever I go to the bank, post office, barbership, super-market, drug store, or library, I usually have a few of the small fry by the hand, or ambling comfortably along half a block in the rear.

On these intimate occasions I become better acquainted with my growing youngsters. I find out how old they are, what is their grade in school, how well they can swim, whether they like dancing classes, and what is their favorite television program.

If I take the car on an errand, the kids pile into the back seat—and into each other. They think this is a safe bit of high jinks because we have a station wagon and I cannot possibly reach them, in order to swat them, from the front seat. Shortly before we reach home, the children are as good as gold. I give them a loud lecture about misbehaving, but we are such jolly good friends when I pull into the driveway of our house that I don't swat them when they get out of the station wagon.

I have given this matter considerable thought and my only conclusion thus far is that I should swat each of them in turn *before* they pile into the station wagon. But if I did that, no child would want to ride with me. In short, I have a tough problem on my hands. Only one thing is certain: I am really getting to know my children.

No matter how difficult it may be, time spent with our children is time well spent. Nothing else is quite so important. Business, golf, television, travel, a good book—all these things have their place in life. But none of them should be allowed to rob our children of the hours they have a right to expect from us.

I know it isn't easy to go answering a lot of silly questions. Was Washington a greater man than Lincoln? How deep can you dig a hole? How different will the world be when I grow up from what it was when you and mother were growing up? How much is a million dollars?

But children grow up very quickly and all too soon the question becomes more searching, more troubled, more mature. One of the greatest blessings a parent can experience is to have his

children go on trusting him, loving him, asking questions, sharing knowledge and experience about this fascinating world in which we live.

It is during the hours we spend with our children that we fashion the leaders of tomorrow. It is in these precious hours that we make history.

**T**HE PROOF OF WHAT I have been saying is to be found in an unusual biography that has just been published, Richard Barkeley's *The Empress Frederick*. It is the story of one of the most tragic women who have occupied a modern throne.

Her name was Victoria Adelaide Mary Louise—Vicky for short. She was the eldest daughter of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert of England. At the age of seventeen she married Prince Frederick William—the future Kaiser Frederick III of Germany. The young couple, very much in love, established a home in Berlin.

Vicky's first child was born in 1859. The birth was a difficult one. At one time an attending physician expressed the view that there was no hope for either mother or child. When at last the baby was born, it had to be slapped and swung for more than an hour before it gave its first cry.

During the anxious hours immediately after the birth, the doctors did not notice that the baby's left arm was useless. The shoulder had been injured, probably during the delivery. The child was named Frederick William Victor Albert. His family called him Willy. Queen Victoria saw him on a visit to Berlin and described him as "a fine, fat child, with a beautiful soft skin." Neither at that time, nor at any future time, did she ever mention his deformity. Willy received special medical treatments, but his left arm remained withered for the rest of his life.

When he was still quite young, Vicky took her eldest son to England to attend the wedding of the Prince of Wales to Princess Alexandra of Denmark. Little Willy wore the kilt, and although overawed by his grandmother, Queen Victoria, he did not show much respect for his uncles and aunts. He managed to wrench the cairngorm off his dirk and threw it across the aisle to annoy his Uncle Leopold. Subsequently, according to one observer, he bit Uncle Leopold in the leg during the ceremony.

When Willy was eight, he was removed from the care of a strict governess and given a harsh tutor. Dr. Hinzpeter was a dour Calvinist, a man without a heart. He imposed such a rigid rule on the boy that in later life Willy did not take kindly to restraint and always wanted to impress people. Vicky spent very little time with her oldest child, believing him to be in good hands.

She mistakenly thought she had more important things to do than to spend a lot of time with her crippled son.

Vicky was keenly interested in politics and international affairs. She wanted very much to give Prussia an English parliamentary type of government and to improve Anglo-German relations. During the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-71, she established a model hospital at Homberg and did her best to improve hospital service generally. She founded three schools for the higher education of girls. She reformed the training of nurses throughout the new German Empire. She built a church in Berlin.

Willy was eventually sent away to school, and then to the University of Bonn. After graduation, despite his deformity, he was permitted to join the army. Willy eagerly absorbed the

(See page 382)

# Franciscan Penance

by PHILIP MARQUARD O.F.M.

**W**HY IS IT THAT SO MANY PEOPLE are unhappy? One fundamental reason is the fact that they lack self-discipline or penance. For penance must precede peace of heart as the sun must precede the light of day.

Christ gave us the charter of penance in his Gospel of penance. That is the reason too that St. Francis went to the Gospel. He discovered its treasure and dug deeply to get everything out of it that he could. A true understanding of penance will help you to appreciate it the more and make it an energetic virtue in your own life.

## 1. Meaning of Penance

One of the chief purposes of penance is to give us control of our craving to have our own way. Christ's prayer to his heavenly Father: "Not my will, but thine be done," conquering for the love of God and man every desire of human nature to have its own way, gives us the basic principle of all Christian living. You find sin and unhappiness in the world when our first parents wanted their own way. It will not leave the world till men learn that their own way, when it is not God's way, is the worst thing they can have.

You well know that this is a hard lesson to master and to put into effect. The desire to have your own way was born with you and was the striking characteristic of your early years. Many a time you loudly or inwardly shouted a firm negation to a

parental direction. Only untold patience on the part of your parents and teachers reduced your selfish will to something like governable dimensions. Too well you realize that the struggle goes on and needs constant and prayerful attention. Even the saints, who adopted heroic measures to straighten this unhealthy human pull whenever it was in conflict with God's way, always kept a wary eye on it and were fearful of it to the very end.

In the Garden of Eden it was "Not thy will but mine be done," and the revolt got into the blood stream of the human race. In the Garden of Gethsemane it was "Not my will but thine be done," and the Blood of Christ was offered to us as a remedy against the infection of Adam and Eve. Because Christ's human will was so perfectly conformed with the divine will, he could say, "I am the Way." And this means that *we* are not the way.

This was St. Francis' starting point. It must also be yours. St. Francis' whole world was sadly mixed up as to the meaning of penance. Not far away from Assisi there were towns led astray by fanatics who threatened to disrupt the Church and to destroy human relations. They insisted that true penance bade you to forsake anything that so much as breathed of human joy and fulfillment, as marriage, family, life, human friendships, delight in nature. All these things to

them were evil and evilly they set about the disruption of human society. These fanatics were the fore-runners of the Puritans to whom the whole world was sad and dreary.

In Rome there were many who fully expected the enthusiastic son of Pietro Bernardone to join the ranks of the fanatics and bolster their appeal. How wrong they were.

From the very beginning Francis was truly Catholic. To Christ and to his Church he went to find the true meaning of Christian penance. Speedily he learnt that true penance inspired you to grieve, but penance must walk hand in hand with sanity. Sanity sharply cried that there were still many things in the world for which to rejoice. Even the penitential person could enter into that rejoicing, for the object of his grief was only that which sanity itself condemned as evil—the sin of the world and personal sin.

St. Francis rightly understood, then, that penance could not possibly be confined to one short period, a period of Lent. It should cover the whole life. Lent was but a special time set apart for a more intense reflection on Christ and a more sincere attempt to enter into the spirit of his sufferings. He realized that there could be more true penance contained in a healthy prayer to do the will of God than in the wearing of torturing chains.

Hence, penance is a life. It is not an action, no matter how often the action be repeated. For penance is living with Christ, rejoicing with Christ, grieving with Christ.

## 2. Necessity of Penance

Penance is your vocation as a Christian and a Franciscan. What does it mean to be a Christian? It is to be a follower of Christ, another

Christ. And we know what he demands of his followers: "I have given you an example, that as I have done to you, you do also" (Jn. 13, 15). "Bring forth worthy fruits of penance" (Lk. 3, 8). You are instructed to bring forth worthy fruits of penance—not only to do penance, but bring forth worthy fruits from it. To fail, is to fail Christ and also to fail in your vocation as a Christian.

When a man is elected to public office you expect him to fulfill his promises and duties. If he fails, you lose respect for him. It is much the same in your Christian profession. You are called to a life in the footsteps of Christ. If you fail in the spirit of penance expected of you, Christ has little love for you. "I wish you were hot or cold, but since you are lukewarm, I will begin to vomit you out of my mouth."

The life of a fish is to live in water. The life of a bird is in the air. But the life of a Christian is in the atmosphere of penance. "Bring forth worthy fruits of penance."

As a Franciscan tertiary you have double duty as far as this penance is concerned. You have joined the Order of Penance, as St. Francis called his Third Order. St. Francis wants you to enter as he did into the real sufferings of Christ. He saw in the Crucified Christ, Christ suffering to the bitter end because man had deserted his Father. He saw that the crucifixion was the work Christ performed in this world.

St. Francis wants you too to do something about the spirit of penance. This doing something is called sacrifice. Sacrifice of all that is not blessed by God. One deep penetrating glance into your soul, one opening up of your personal secret to Christ, one grace-strengthening resolve to do something about it may

be more agonizing and more realistically penitential than severe fasting and scourging of the body. Such an approach to penance made St. Francis dismount from his horse and kiss the leper. He said lepers were loathsome to him until he overcame himself and did just that. Then he said that all was turned into sweetness of body and soul. Peace of soul was his.

The spirit of penance is also necessary to safeguard your supernatural life. Someone asked Blessed Giles, an early companion of St. Francis, why St. John the Baptist practiced so much penance. Blessed Giles replied with a question. "Why do we salt fresh fish? Is it not done that they may not decay? So you must be salted with penance, that your supernatural life may remain untainted."

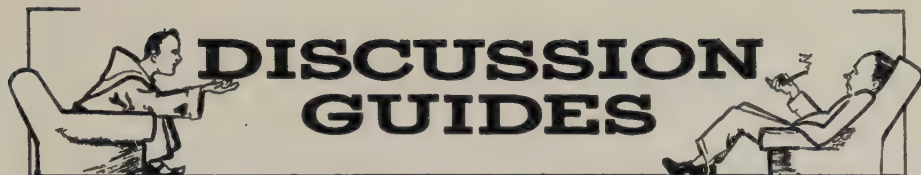
Your lower passions were not destroyed by the Redemption. Hence a struggle will always go on within you. Christ did not mince words when he told you to preserve your supernatural life. "If your hand or your foot scandalize you, cut it off, and cast it from you. It is better for you to enter into life maimed or lame, than, having two hands or two feet, to be cast into everlasting fire" (Mt. 18, 8).

Involuntary penances, like sickness, old age, difficult tasks, are, no doubt, pleasing to God when they are accepted patiently for his sake. The difference between them and self-imposed penances is the difference between Simon of Cyrene and Veronica. Simon was coerced; Veronica was not. Of the two good deeds Veronica's, we may surmise, was the most pleasing to Christ. The two instances exemplify the highest motive for practicing penance—a desire to be asso-

ciated with Christ in his self-immolation, a generous and grateful attitude which will not allow us to be mere spectators of his suffering, a shame and sense of cowardice at having our own way while he lived without having his own way, the way of Omnipotence.

It is the voluntary and self-imposed penances that keep you in close touch with him. They are like the little fidelities to the memory of an absent friend: as long as you practice them you feel a loyalty that is eager to meet him or to write to him. If you grow lax, a certain sense of disloyalty will diminish your eagerness to communicate with him. You may excuse yourself on the score that in substantial matters you are true to him, but it is the little things that are the true cement of friendship. You may be ready to die for Christ and, until that remote emergency arises, make life as easy as possible by having your own way short of sinning, you shall not be in the mood to seek him eagerly in prayer.

A study of the wartime phenomenon known as the black market will convince you that it has its counterpart in the spiritual life. Everyone wants to see his country win a war, but many want to win it with a minimum of inconvenience. Everyone also wants to win Christ's war, but many hope to win it comfortably without any disturbance to their natural desires. A popular leader who patronizes the black market incurs more odium than the ordinary citizen. So in Christ's war, a professed tertiary, pledged to Christ, has a special obligation to be self-denying in his life. You must also remember that pleasure admitted in undue degree enslaves your will. ●



**TEXT:**

"Therefore if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has anything against you, leave your gift before the altar and go first to be reconciled with your brother, and then come and offer your gift" (Mt. 5: 23-24).

"There are many people that devote themselves to prayers and devotions, and practice bodily restrictions and afflictions of many kinds, but at a single word that seems offensive to their person, or at anything taken away from them, they are quickly scandalized and upset" (Words, 191 m).

**SUBJECT:**

PRAYER IN ACTION.

1. *Were these people mentioned by St. Francis benefitting from their prayers?*
  2. *What does this indicate about our attitude toward prayer?*
  3. *Christ says we should leave our prayer and seek forgiveness and then come back to pray. What should be our attitude after prayer?*
  4. *Can a Tertiary ever be scandalized? What should he have that acts as a "shock absorber?"*
  5. *What should be the result of an increased prayer life?*
- 

**TEXT:**

"If you love me, keep my commandments" (Jn. 14, 15).

"Listen children of the Lord . . . Turn the ear of your heart to the voice of the Son of God and obey it. With all your heart keep his commandments, and fulfill his counsels with a perfect will . . . Persevere under holy discipline and obedience and with a good and firm resolution comply with what you have promised."

**SUBJECT:**

LOVE OF GOD IS MEASURED BY OBEDIENCE TO HIS WILL.

1. *God has called us to be Franciscans, to live in poverty, in moderation. . . What part does this moderation play in our recreation?*
2. *In this moderation a negative attitude only?*
3. *Is this moderation unknown to most people, even Catholics?*
4. *How in this area of living can we make use of moderation?*

*The hollow laughter of the Holly Ball  
echos the heart's closed door  
as the knocking continues at . . .*

## THE DOOR OF THE INN

by GERALDINE LISS, TERTIARY

IT CAME DECEMBER FIRST. The invitation, I mean. I haven't slept a single night since with dreaming. It's really quite a thrill to be going to the Holly Ball for the second time. Oh, how well I remember last year—white formal, red poinsettias, silver slippers, snow flakes, pine trees, holly berries, lilting music, low voices, and laughter.

The laughter! I want to forget the laughter, but it stays in the back of my mind. It is empty laughter, the kind you hear when people substitute fun for joy. And I wonder if that is the kind of laughter that Joseph heard in the courtyard around the inn.

*"And she wrapped Him in swaddling clothes and laid Him in the manger, because there was no room for them in the inn."*

No room. The full laughter from within testifies that there is no room in the inn. Many people from many places brought together, awaiting census, talking, laughing, recalling the old days. The inn is full of people who got there first, people who can pay, people who can make their influence felt, like little Caesars, baby Herods.

So the innkeeper looks at the just man Joseph and ponders: "They cannot pay much. Shall I put a rich man out to take in these?" He says to the foster-father of God, "No

room." And the innkeeper is guilty of putting Christ out into the cold.

\* \* \*

And I, have I never been guilty? Have I never closed my heart and said, "No room. There is no room. Go elsewhere, God, talk to the others, people who are not busy, those who have time." Not in so many words perhaps. I have not refused Him entrance by sin.

But I have been too busy: too busy sleeping to go to Mass, too busy eating to say grace, too busy planning Easter to keep Lent, too busy relaxing to pray my office, too busy dating to do my homework, too busy spending money to save any for charity, too busy lolling on the beach to go to confession, too busy working to be kind to another, too busy recreating to say my rosary, too busy buying Christmas presents to remember it is Advent, too busy being human to remember that I am also spiritual, too busy enjoying this life to think about the next.

And what is wrong with all of that? Nothing wrong. Nothing sinful. No worse than the innkeeper. Just a silent way of saying, "No room" to Christ when he applies for lodging in my heart. I cannot hear His knocking at the door, the laughter is too loud! And I wonder why all my fun does not make me joyful inside.

But Advent ends, and Christmas comes, and soon it is time for the Midnight Mass.

\* \* \*

**I** WALK INTO THE CHURCH. It is like last year — red poinsettias, pine trees, tall candles, Christmas carols, white vestments. The Mass begins . . . “Thou art my Son, this day I have begotten thee. . . Gloria in excelsis Deo. . . O God, who hast made this most holy night to shine forth with the splendor of the True Light. . . In the brightness of the saints, from the womb before the day star I begot thee. . . And she wrapped Him in swaddling clothes and laid Him in the manger, because there was no room for them in the inn. . . Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad. . . May our offering on this day’s feast be acceptable to thee. . . Hoc est enim corpus meum. . . Domine, non sum dignus. . .

No, I am not worthy. Little Jesus, I am most unworthy. But the innkeeper said, “No room” and I cannot be like the innkeeper. God forbid, I cannot. So many have pushed You away, have said, “Go elsewhere, Christ, I am busy. Can I also say, “Go find another heart”?

Domine, non sum dignus. . . You need not lie in the manger, Jesus, there *is* room in my heart. It is warmer than the stable, and it is clean, and it has been lit by sanctifying grace. The laughter from the inn rings tonight also. Empty laughter from empty hearts that have mistaken fun for joy, and know not why they are sad and aching in the midst of the hilarity.

Domine, non sum dignus. . . Come to me, Christ Child, rest in my heart, stay within it forever so that I may carry the Joy of Christmas to the laughing world about me. ●

## GIFT FOR MARY

There were sweetmeats and cigarettes and even warmer clothes. Hope ran high. The sick were kept alive instead of being allowed to die. The healthy were given a new lease on life. Shortly after, kindly hands, guided no doubt by the Madonna, brought liberty and life. From the jaws of death Alexander Fritta has come forth never doubting for one moment that he is alive because of the Blessed Virgin. As a grateful child he wants this story told in print and in song so that no one will ever hesitate to turn to her regardless of how hopeless the case. It is his added desire that whenever his Ave Maria is sung and whenever his Ave Maria is heard it may be a fervent prayer for all who suffer unjust imprisonment and especially for one of his fellow country men, Cardinal Mindszenti. ●



**Two O.F.M. Rescripts:** (1) The Sacred Congregation of Rites has granted the petition of the Minister General that in the church of the Order of Friars Minor the usual incensation be permitted without the usual ministry in sung masses for the living on doubles of the first and second class, on Sundays and on other feasts of precept. (2) The Sacred Congregation of Rites has again renewed for five years permission for brothers and sisters of the Third Order Regular to touch and handle the sacred vessels and to wash the purificators. ●

BACK TO THE RULE

**Wanted:**

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# **More Dirty Hands**

by XAVIER CARROLL O.F.M.

**T**HE THIRD ORDER RULE exhorts tertiaries to promote good works: "In their daily life let them strive to promote . . . good works" (II, 8). There is some theoretical discussion as to what constitutes proper tertiary activity. However, there can be no discussion about immediate works of mercy. This is Francis himself. It was the daily fare of the founder and his first followers. It characterized the first tertiaries and St. Clare as well. Serving immediate human needs is Franciscan activity or nothing is.

The Franciscan movement has always been a grass roots sort of thing. It is uncomplicated and direct. This is its special genius. Charity can be rendered efficiently nowadays by giving to Red Feather drives, Community Chests, diocesan collections and a hundred others. But there is something impersonal about this. It does

not have that formative effect on the donor as do personal efforts to relieve those in need. There is something about bandaging a sore, cleaning a hovel, cooking a meal, running an errand, being a companion to the aged, that makes for human solidarity, which makes one feel his community with all the sons of God. It cuts through conventions and human hierarchies and leaves us with the stark realization of our common dependency on a merciful Lord.

St. Francis was this kind of a supernatural humanist. His love of God, his sanctity, begins with the kissing of a leper. Almost all of our memories of him are filled with dramatic and instructive man to man relationships. He formed and was formed by his encounters with fellow humans in need of love and loving service.

And so let us keep our organized

charities, expand and multiply them. Let us promote credit unions and so many other ways of efficiency assisting our brothers in Christ. But on the fraternity level we must encourage the personal donation of self by the tertiaries to develop successfully the Franciscan character. It is not enough to read about and be instructed in Franciscan charity. We have to get our own hands dirty.

Giorgio la Pira understands this. He is the mayor of Florence and a tertiary in the true tradition. As a professor of law at the university he was long known as the "Father of the poor" for his Francis-like habits of charity to beggars and poor people up and down Italy. His colleagues referred to him as, "the beggar." His charity leaves him in a continuous state of penury. He has one suit, a dark shiny one. But Giorgio la Pira is an intelligent man and no sentimentalist. He realizes that in the last analysis social ideals, Christian or otherwise, are realized through political action. If he loved the poor and really wanted to help them effectively, he must throw himself into the political scene. No politician at heart, he bowed to reality and stepped into the arena for the sake of the poor and the "little people." Many a ward boss says the same thing. No one doubted that la Pira meant it. Giorgio rose through various posts and awoke one morning to find that 30,000 Florentines had elected him their mayor.

Now he was in a position to direct from his office sweeping reforms in favor of his beloved poor and suffering. And he did. He did revolutionary things which had even the communists gasping. But he never put aside his direct relations with the poor. He was too conscious of that

human weakness we all share of becoming gradually cold to humans as we work feverishly for humanity. The shiny suit is still on his back. You'll find his rain coat on some poor beggar who met him in a downpour. Three new ties from former prime minister de Gasperi went to a mendicant before la Pira left Rome for Florence. He still walks in the slums, giving of himself personally to assuage human suffering. He knows that this is necessary for him if his efficient, large scale operations are to be correctly motivated and sustained.

Good works of this direct kind are necessary for the health of the fraternity. Tertiaries absorb enough words on the subject of charity. More dirty hands are needed.

But before we go afield looking for ways and places to limber up our charity let us take a glance about the household. There is still some truth to the saying that charity begins at home. There is a hierarchy to be observed and first we must take care of obligations. Often there are invalids at home, old people in the relationship, who have first claim on our solicitude. Then there are the claims of tertiary confreres who have come upon ill times. But beginning at home our charity ought not stay there. It seems extremely proper that the local Third Order fraternity should be known as a group of very generous people, generous with themselves. A group that you would call on if you knew someone needed some personal assistance. Every unfortunate in Umbria knew where Francis lived. And they were never disappointed. It will be a happy day in the Franciscan section of Heaven when tertiaries are known as people who aren't afraid to get their hands dirty for a needy brother or sister. ●

# Ubertin of Casale, Franciscan Mystic

Teacher of the Love of Jesus  
by

CUTHBERT GUMBINGER,  
O.F.M., Cap.

THE FRANCISCAN ORDER OWES much to Friar Ubertin of Casale, a debt not always acknowledged. In fact, he is almost forgotten. Owing to many trials in his Franciscan life, and to the cruelty of circumstances and misunderstandings, Ubertin has often been neglected. He himself is partly to blame for this because he condemns others so severely in his writings. But who is perfect in this life? The fact remains that Ubertin burned with a deep and holy love and zeal for Jesus Christ. It may indeed be that he went to excess in certain things. Love knows no limits. Superiors and popes had trouble with Ubertin; he made enemies among powerful persons. Nonetheless we wish to be taught by him, since he has proved himself an able master of the love of Jesus.

## UBERTIN'S LIFE AND INFLUENCE

Born at Casale in the diocese of Vercelli in Piedmont in 1259, Ubertin entered the Franciscan Order in 1273 at the age of fourteen, probably at Monteferrato. He disliked philosophy but was quickly drawn to a deep union with Christ and meditated daily on the various phases of Christ's life. For thirteen years the young friar was exceptionally devout in keeping Christ and Mary company day and night. He claims that Our Lord told him how to divide the days of the week in this sort of mystic communing with him according to the various stages of Christ's life and sufferings, and finally to consider Christ's Resurrection and Ascension into Heaven. Some claim Ubertin wrote a book on these matters at that time, but he himself denies it.

No doubt Ubertin learned this devout mystic contemplation from his elders, many of whom were still on fire with Francis' early fervor and love for Christ. During these early years Ubertin was in a Genoese friary, and had advanced greatly in the spiritual life.

In 1285 Ubertin was sent to Florence to continue his studies, but first he visited Rome and then Umbria. At Greccio he met Blessed John of Parma, a former General of the Franciscan Order, who was in retirement there for twenty five years. Uberton talked with John of the Order's ideals and the old man consoled and encouraged him in strict religious observance. He also taught the young man higher contemplation of the life of Christ and instructed him regarding the Portiuncula indulgence. John also taught Ubertin the secrets of the apocalyptic prophecies regarding the Seraphic Order. Ubertin spent the feast of the Portiuncula at St. Mary of the Angels near Assisi. He prayed there day and night and went away a new man, filled ever more with "the new spirit of the life of Christ and the understanding of the holy rule." Encouraged by this, and by the renewal of the Christian spirit which John of Parma foresaw through the Franciscan Order, Ubertin went to Cortona where he met the tertiary penitent, St. Margaret of Cortona and her son, who was a Friar Minor. Just how much she influenced Ubertin we do not know, but some authors think that they spoke much about the reformist tendencies in the Franciscan Order.

In Florence, Ubertin's directors completed the mystic training he had received in Genoa and whatever he had learned from John and Margaret. Ubertin tells us that in

Florence he found many who were "boiling over with the spirit of Jesus." Among them was a tertiary, Blessed Peter Pettinaio of Siena, a solitary who was famous for his sanctity. Even Dante knew him and rejoiced to have been helped by his powerful prayers (Divine Comedy, Purgatory, Cant. XIII). We are not certain whether Dante and Ubertin ever met, but it seems probably that they knew each other. Ubertin began to give eloquent sermons in Florence about this time, and Dante was known to the friars at Sante Croce where Ubertin lived. The two may also have met at Peter's hermitage. However, Dante reproaches Ubertin (Divine Comedy, Paradise, Cant. XII) for not having represented the Franciscan ideal more faithfully than Matthew of Aquasparta. Dante allows St. Bonaventure to say this. Dante certainly read Ubertin's work *The Tree of the Crucified Life of Jesus* since the resemblances between this work and Dante's (later) *Divine Comedy* are all too clear.

#### CECILIA OF FLORENCE

Another devout tertiary, Cecilia of Florence joined her efforts to those of Blessed Peter in teaching Ubertin the paths of the mystic life. It was especially Cecilia who initiated Ubertin to the highest form of the contemplation of the life of Christ. She saw how much the young friar longed for this. We must never forget to be grateful to these three tertiaries, St. Margaret of Cortona, Blessed Peter of Siena and Cecilia of Florence, for the help they gave Ubertin in advancing in the knowledge of Jesus, because the entire subsequent history of the Seraphic Order has been marvelously influenced by this deeper knowledge and love. Ubertin handed it on to others in his immortal work (cited

above) and from him countless members of the Franciscan Order have drunk sweet draughts from this clear fountain of the love of Jesus. We shall see how much saints, such as Bernardine of Siena and John Capistran, prized Ubertain's work, taking from it whole passages and popularizing it in their sermons.

#### PETER JOHN OLIVI

It was the famous friar, Peter John Olivi, who contributed more than others to the mystical formation and development of Ubertain. It was in 1287 that Olivi came to Florence as a professor (lector), venerated by his followers as a confessor of the faith. Owing to his holiness and command of theology, he was the oracle of the oracle of the Spirituals in the order. However, the latter did not always follow his moderate judgment! In a short time Olivi made such an impression on Ubertain by teaching him the higher sense of the Sacred Scriptures and the mysteries of the epoch of the Holy Spirit, which was to be that of the Franciscans, that Ubertain said he was renewed in spirit. Yet he tells us that he did not agree in everything with Olivi, quoting the old adage: "Even Homer sometimes nods." Ubertain ever held Olivi in the highest regard and became his most eloquent defender at the council of Vienna in 1311.

But Ubertain enjoyed Olivi's training only for two years. Ubertain preached during that time and moved many souls to a higher life. Yet Ubertain was never satisfied with himself and he considered himself a great sinner, as he tells us in his work. We must remember, however, that he was a fervent and holy religious. When he wrote in 1305, in a great mystic exaltation, even the smallest faults and sins seemed great

to him. From 1289 till 1298 Ubertain taught Sacred Scripture (probably to the young friars) at Paris. Here he lost much of his fervor and blames himself for it. Christ appeared to him in a dream and upbraided him for it.

#### BLESSED ANGELA OF FOLIGNO

In 1298 Ubertain returned to Tuscany and there he met Blessed Angela of Foligno, famous tertiary mystic. He claims God himself spoke to him through her. It was she, who by her example and ardent words, brought Ubertain back to a mortified and fervent life, and taught him profound mysteries of divine love. He cannot praise her enough! For the third time in his life he became "a new man!" He calls her "a most holy soul" and said that in her spiritual guidance of many she was truly "a mother of beautiful love, of salutary fear, of greatness of soul and of high hope." The holy widow of Foligno brought Ubertain back to Christ through the mystic contemplation of Christ's life and the austerities of Ubertain's earlier years.

Three times holy women helped Ubertain in his spiritual quest. These women pointed out to him the safer and higher road to Jesus Christ. Each woman seemed to him sent by Christ and each taught him a nobler doctrine. It was Angela who had a great influence on him in definitely orientating him towards the rigorism of the Franciscan Spirituals. It is certain that he leaned towards the stricter ideals of the rule from the beginning of his religious life, but sometimes he vacillated. He had used mitigations of the rule when offered to him by his superiors. Angela strengthened him in stricter views and way of life, but she did it with almost maternal tenderness,

and with a view to moderation and obedience. If he had followed her advice, and the example of men like John of Parma, Olivi and Conrad of Offida, Ubertin would have been safe. His ardent and violent character, however, caused him later on to go to extremes and to exaggerate the ideals and tendencies of his friends.

#### ARDENT PREACHER

Ubertin was influenced by the highest ideals of the Seraphic Order in regard to imitation of Christ, and especially love for him and extreme poverty such as he practiced. In 1298 he was appointed lector in Tuscany. He also preached in central Italy and drew many followers, but also unsettled a good number of souls by his extreme views. He defended the Spirituals who were rigorists for Franciscan poverty. But he was also active in exposing heretics and refuting heresies, especially those connected with the doctrines of Amaury of Benes and Gerard Cicarelli. Nonetheless Ubertin made enemies among powerful persons who denounced him to Pope Benedict XI. Called to Rome by the Pope, the people demanded that he be freed, and the Pope complied. But the superiors relegated Ubertin to Mt. La Verna in 1304 because his preaching disturbed many in the friaries and drew too many people after him. There he wrote his greatest work, *The Tree of the Crucified Life of Jesus*, for which countless souls are indebted to him.

Before we consider this work in another article, suffice it to say that for Ubertin there was only one science—Mystical Theology. All else should merely serve that science or should not be even considered. In the Prologue of his great work he speaks of his life. But it is a strange

story, one of great favors from God, lamentations about his unworthiness his falls, his ingratitude, then praises of Christ. Yet, there is nothing of the realities of daily life.

Thus Ubertin's mystical doctrine is so different from that of St. Bonaventure who, though he speaks of high doctrine, never loses sight of practical life. Having become General of the Order at thirty-five, Bonaventure knew men of all kinds of character, and he knew that the Franciscan ideal, if it was not to remain a pure fiction, must be adapted to the needs of the hour. Ubertin saw merely a fixed and hard ideal! To imitate Christ for Ubertin meant to be absolutely poor in the most rigorous manner both individually and as a community. Whoever did not observe this was a laxist in Ubertin's eyes.

By the same token Ubertin loved Christ most tenderly and was a true mystic. Had he had more patience, and more of the wide outlook of Bonaventure, we probably would have another great saint in Ubertin. He had a great and loving heart. We see this in the way he speaks of those who trained him in knowing and loving Christ. Probably for this very reason Ubertin was later on so highly esteemed at the papal court. It was this love for Christ that he poured out in the greatest work of his life.

The Order and the Church should be ever grateful to him. He had his faults, but he lived long to weep over them. Some say he died in 1340, others about 1350. In fact we know not where or when he died nor where he is buried. It matters little. Ubertin will ever be at home in the Franciscan Order, for he loved Christ as probably few others have loved him. ●

# BOOKS

**Forward the Layman**, J. M. Perrin, O.P., Newman Press, \$3.25.

The layman must assume his responsibility in the Church, for laymen are set in the midst of life. They know it and live with all its conditions. They are fitted for joining in the building of God's new world. They bring to the task, in addition to their special abilities and their loyalty to the common need, an inspiration from above and a spirituality that can leaven society. Without these, the world is like a bomb that is in danger of detonating. One of the great obstacles hindering people outside the Church is the lack of supernatural vitality in so many Christians and even practicing Catholics. Cardinal Suhard emphasizes the fact that "the laymen have an irreplaceable part because they have to take up the responsibilities proper to them" in the work of the Church. In this book Fr. Perrin attempts to outline a plan to help the layman assume his rightful position. In the first part he points up the exact role of the laity. In the second, he outlines the spirituality that must form an integral part of the life of the true apostle. In the third part, he treats the apostolic approach. The fourth section, which is the disappointing one, treats of the Secular Institutes. There is some fuzzy thinking in several sections which makes one wonder if the translation is accurate. For example, we read, "Also, on the level of intercession for the world, of the circulation of life in the Church and the increase of the Mystical Body in Charity—essential, primary and super-essential—there is no difference between the mission of the layman and that of clerics." There is a difference between the two. Or again, "If devoted laymen could be found, competent and prudent, to undertake the temporal business of the Church and the different activities of the parish, what a gain it would be for the priests." The adjectives defining the type of laymen needed are

absolutely essential lest we fall into trusteeship which has given the Church, especially here in America, some anxious moments in the past. ●

**A Dictionary of Mary**, Donald Attwater, Kenedy, \$6.50.

Here are 312 pages jammed with information about the Blessed Virgin. The volume contains more than 600 entries arranged in alphabetical order. The subjects treated can be classified as theological, doctrinal, historical, liturgical, prayers and devotion, hymnody, feasts, shrines and pilgrimages, visions and revelations, Marian titles, art and images. This is a veritable encyclopedia and will answer just about every question on the Blessed Virgin. ●

**Crippled Victory**, Josephine Burton, Sheed and Ward, \$2.75.

A stirring account of the depth of a mother's devotion and love. All that the doctor could say when her son was born was, "teach him to use his toes." A sorrier sight was not to be seen. Anthony Burton was born with tremendous physical handicaps. His hands were useless, his face paralyzed, the roof of his mouth convex and one of his eyes teared uncontrollably. Only a mother could do what Mrs. Burton did. With infinite patience she worked with her son, making him use what limited ability he had. Finally, after years of work, he was able to go to a boarding school where he distinguished himself as a student, and amazingly enough, even learned to play tennis. It is not the author's intention to sing her own praises, but rather to demonstrate what can be done by determination, perseverance and prayer. ●

**Knight of Molokai**, Eva K. Betz, St. Anthony Guild, \$2.50.

The story of Father Damien's heroic life with the lepers of Molokai is well known by this time. It is a story, however, that never fails to inspire. Once again Damien of Molokai comes to life in these pages

written especially for young people. Here is all the pathos and suspense, the joy and tragedy that has been crowded into the life of this great soul. Eva Betz knows her readers and she can tell a story that will hold the interest of the youngsters. This book will be an excellent addition to any child's library. ●

**The Treasure of the Mohawks**, Teri Martini, St. Anthony Guild, \$2.00.

Another book written for children. It has all the adventure of Indian lore and battling braves. But also the story of Kateri Tekakwitha. She is the little Indian maiden whom the Church has called Venerable and who may one day become the first American Indian saint. She was not a pretty girl because of small pox scars, but she was a good and gentle girl who loathed the savagery and brutality of her kin. Her piety soon became evident and when she died at the early age of twenty-four, the Indians at the mission settlement began to pray, not *for* her but *to* her. Kateri Tekakwitha, who in life had been scarred and old-looking beyond her age, in death was suddenly transformed. The pockmarked skin became smooth and clear and glowing. A story that inspires and instructs. ●

**Living the Gospel**, Rev. Conrad Polzer O.F.M. Cap., Third Order Bureau, 15 cents.

In sixteen well written pages Fr. Conrad, a member of the Central Third Order Executive Board, gives an appealing introduction to the Third Order life. He outlines the requirements, reviews the history, and delineates the spirit of the Third Order. Fr. Conrad is a veteran in the field and brings to this brief account a wealth of experience which he puts to good use. *Living the Gospel* is excellent for the person one wants to interest in the Third Order. ●

**American Catholics and the Intellectual Life**, J. Tracy Ellis, Heritage Foundation, \$1.25.

Monsignor Ellis has dared to say aloud what many others have been saying behind closed doors, and it hurts. "The weakest aspect," he says, "of this country lies in its failure to produce national leaders and to exercise commanding influence in intellectual circles." One of the reasons for this is the fact that Catholic universities are engrossed in their mad

pursuit of every passing fancy that crosses the American educational scene and find relatively little time for distinguished contributions to scholastic philosophy. This the author calls a "betrayal of what is peculiarly our own." The second major defect is "a betrayal of one another." By this he means the development of numerous competing graduate schools, none of which is adequately endowed, few of which have adequately trained personnel, all of which are draining from each other the strength that is necessary for superior achievement. Thus mediocrity is perpetuated. Monsignor Ellis states forthrightly that unless there be an end of senseless duplication of effort and wasteful proliferation we run the peril of financial bankruptcy. The chief blame, he asserts, lies with the Catholics themselves. "It lies in their frequently self-imposed ghetto mentality which prevents them from mingling as they should with their non-Catholic colleagues and in their lack of industry and habits of work. It lies in their failure to measure up to their responsibilities in the incomparable tradition of Catholic learning of which they are the direct heirs." This study should give all of us reason for self-examination. We spend so much for our Catholic educational system; we should expect greater returns. See report on Serra Academy in this issue of the FORUM. ●

**Father Michael Pro.**, W. P. Donnelly, S.J., St. Anthony Guild, 50 cents.

In October 1954 Archbishop Luis Martínez of Mexico announced the signing of the final documents in the preliminary process for the beatification of Fr. Michael Pro, the Mexican Jesuit who was martyred in that country in 1927. Born and reared in a mining town situated in the heart of Mexico, Fr. Pro found his life's work in the oft-repeated battle cry of Leo XIII and Pius XI: "Go to the workman." His constant endeavor was to translate into everyday life the directions of the Holy Father regarding the workman and the poor. His success is a symbol of the Church's answer to the challenge of atheistic Communism. It is precisely in this that the supreme importance of the life and death of Fr. Pro lies. All he wanted to do was serve his people and for this he gave up his life. His skirmishes with the government and his victories for Christ are recounted here. ●

# EMPRESS VICKY

(Continued from page 367)

blood-and-iron philosophy of Bismarck and the officer corps. He ceased to pay any attention to his mother's kindlier and more democratic views. She had never devoted much time to him. Why should he listen to her now? The rift between son and mother widened and was never healed.

Willy is known in history as Kaiser William II of Germany whose truculent militarism, disregard of solemn treaty obligations and unrestricted submarine warfare brought the United States into World War I against him.

If the Empress Frederick had spent

more time with Willy, had given him the love and affection he craved, had helped him to grow strong in wisdom and justice, she might have changed the course of history. Her greatest failure was her failure to realize that the most important task for parents is the Christian training of their children. Whatever good Vicky accomplished in trying to improve mankind is forgotten today. What is remembered is that she spent very little time with her crippled oldest son—the future Emperor of Germany. She thought other things were far more important. ●

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## CALENDAR OF PLENARY INDULGENCES DECEMBER

1. All souls of the Order—Fran. (Conv. Oct. 5, Cap. Nov. 3, T.O.R. Dec. 2).
2. All souls of the Order—T.O.R. (tr.)
7. (Fast day for the Order—Vigil of the Im. Conception.)
8. Immaculate Conception, Patron of all the Franciscan Family—G.A. & P.I.
9. Bl. Delphine V. 3 Or.—Cap. and T.O.R. (Fran. Sept. 26, Conv. Nov. 27).
16. First day of the Christmas novena.
24. Last day of the Christmas novena.
25. Christmas—G.A.

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